

**For Immediate Release:**

PRESS RELEASE

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**SECRETARY of STATE JAEGER HOLDS REGIONAL  
ELECTION EQUIPMENT TRAINING FOR COUNTIES**

Bismarck, N.D. – As one of few states compliant with the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) by the January 1, 2006 deadline imposed by the Act, all 53 counties in North Dakota received new voting equipment in the fall of 2005. According to Jaeger, 10 regionalized trainings session were held around the state during the months of February and March to assist counties with implementing the new equipment.

Three-day regional training sessions were held in Williston, Dickinson (two sessions), Mandan, Devils Lake, Grand Forks, Minot, Bismarck, Carrington, and Lisbon. Anywhere from three to seven counties attended each session, depending on the county auditor's schedule and proximity to the training site. Counties were trained on transporting, maintaining and preparing the new equipment for Election Day, electronically and centrally tallying precinct level results, and training others on using the new equipment.

HAVA, in part, requires every polling site in the country to offer second-chance voting and a method for private and independent voting for persons with disabilities. To answer these mandates, in 2004, the state contracted to purchase a new voting system to be used in every polling site in the state. The new equipment was purchased through a cost-share program utilizing federal funds for 95% of the purchase price, with the other 5% split between the state and counties.

Twenty-eight of North Dakota's 53 counties used part of the new voting system in 2004, which counts voters ballots at the precinct. Starting with the 2006 Primary Election, June 13, every county will use the precinct level ballot counters. Additionally, every county's polling sites will also have the AutoMARK, which assists voters marking their paper ballots privately and independently.

Prior to the introduction of HAVA, 45 counties counted ballots centrally in the county auditor's office on election night, and eight counted ballots by hand. Two of those counties converted to the new system in 2004, and the remaining six counties will move from hand counted paper ballots to electronically counted ballots at the precinct level this June.